3.20 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

3.20.1 Regulatory Background

This section describes lands with wilderness characteristics in the analysis area and discloses potential Project impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics.

Managing the wilderness resource is part of the BLM's multiple use mission. Lands with wilderness characteristics provide a range of uses and benefits in addition to their value as settings for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. Section 201 of FLPMA requires the BLM to maintain, on a continuing basis, an inventory of all public lands and their resources and other values, which includes wilderness characteristics. Section 201 also provides that the preparation and maintenance of the inventory shall not, by itself, change or prevent change of the management or use of public lands. Regardless of past inventory, the BLM must maintain and update as necessary, its inventory of wilderness resources on public lands. BLM Manuals 6310 and 6320 issued on March 15, 2012, clarify that the requirements of Section 201 of FLPMA remain in effect. The manuals identify specific circumstances where the BLM will update or initiate a wilderness characteristics inventory, including the following:

1. The public or the BLM identifies wilderness characteristics as an issue during the NEPA process.
2. The BLM has new information concerning resource conditions, including wilderness characteristics information submitted by the public that meets the BLM's minimum standard (as described in BLM Manual 6310).
3. A project that may impact wilderness characteristics is undergoing NEPA analysis.

The primary function of an inventory is to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. The inventory for wilderness characteristics is based on criteria, defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act and incorporated in Section 603 of FLPMA, for sufficient size; naturalness; outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation; and supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values). Inventory areas that meet the size, naturalness, and outstanding solitude and/or the outstanding primitive and unconfined recreation criteria are identified as lands with wilderness characteristics. The BLM may conduct the inventory of lands, including lands with wilderness characteristics, using available information (e.g., existing maps, photos, records related to range projects, monitoring data) and field verification.

3.20.2 Data Sources

BLM IM 2013-106 clarifies that the BLM is responsible for compiling and maintaining the wilderness characteristics inventory, making findings regarding the presence or absence of lands with wilderness characteristics available to the public, and incorporating the results of the inventory into the NEPA and/or planning processes. While conducting the wilderness characteristics inventory is a BLM responsibility, the BLM can consider pertinent information from individual citizens, non-governmental organizations, and cooperating agencies to help inform BLM's inventory process. Therefore, any information from external entities pertinent to the lands with wilderness characteristics inventory has been considered by the BLM in their most recent inventory files available for this Project analysis. Updated lands with wilderness characteristics inventory files were obtained from affected BLM FOs. Information was provided by the following: Rawlins FO, Little Snake FO, White River FO, Utah State Office, Moab FO, Cedar City FO, Fillmore FO, and Caliente FO.

3.20.3 Analysis Area

The analysis area consists of the refined transmission corridor and extends up to 1 mile on either side where access roads or construction support areas may be located as well as the siting areas for the terminals and electrode beds.

3.20.4 Baseline Description

Many BLM FOs have maintained the wilderness inventories originally developed in their jurisdiction during the late 1970s or early 1980s. They also have retained their original inventory units as a basis for initiating updates to the original inventory. However, when no inventory units have been established or no land use plan decisions in approved RMPs have been made regarding lands with wilderness characteristics, BLM may need to update the inventory and identify any lands with wilderness characteristics to allow analysis of impacts in the associated NEPA document (per BLM Manual 6310). A desktop analysis was conducted to determine whether any of the proposed or alternative corridors would directly affect any lands with wilderness characteristics. Available information regarding existing wilderness inventories was obtained from each BLM FO. Field verification of previously unsurveyed inventory units in the Little Snake, White River, and Caliente FOs were completed in 2012. Field verification of previously unsurveyed inventory units in the Fillmore FO was completed in 2014. **Figures 3.20-1** through **3.20-3** show existing lands with wilderness characteristics units, within the analysis area, which have been found to possess wilderness characteristics. There are 41 units within the analysis area.

3.20.5 Regional Summary

Table 3.20-1 shows lands with wilderness characteristics units within the analysis area; only inventory units found to contain wilderness characteristics are included in the table and discussed in Section 3.20.6. These units are depicted in **Figures 3.20-1** through **3.20-3**.

While all units listed in **Table 3.20-1** meet the criteria for lands with wilderness characteristics, only one unit (Mexican Mountain, Price FO) has an approved RMP decision that intends to manage the unit as a natural area to protect, preserve, and maintain wilderness characteristics.

Some units listed in **Table 3.20-1** have been evaluated in a RMP process, but the BLM determined to not manage these areas for their wilderness characteristics, including affected units in the following FOs: Vernal, Moab, and Price. The remaining units listed in **Table 3.20-1** have not been formally evaluated in a RMP process for appropriate management decisions for wilderness characteristics.

3.20.6 Impacts to Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

The analysis consists of determining whether lands with wilderness characteristics units are intersected and whether remaining portions would continue to meet lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. The analysis considers:

- Any loss of wilderness characteristics in areas that were inventoried and found to possess wilderness character;
- Any impact to lands with wilderness characteristics that the BLM has administratively made a decision to protect; and
- Any impact to existing wilderness characteristics that would negate the eligibility of the whole inventoried area for consideration in a future planning effort for wilderness character protection.

The following analysis assumes that the ROW containing the transmission line and associated access roads would create the new boundary of the lands with wilderness characteristics units, which is consistent with the guidelines as excerpted from BLM Manual 6310.06.C.3 (pp. 9-10):

"b. When establishing the boundary, do not create a setback or buffer from the physical edge of the imprint of man";

"c. Developed ROW are treated like other impacts, and the boundary should be drawn to exclude those ROWs"; and,

"e. …The location of boundaries should primarily be set to exclude the unnatural portions of the area."

Since the ROW associated with the transmission line and roads would need to be excluded from the unit, the resulting effect would be the reduced size, which is disclosed in the following sections along with effects that would result in a unit less than the 5,000-acre threshold. With regard to impacts to naturalness, 6310.06.C.2.b.iii (p. 7) notes that "human impacts outside the area will not normally be considered in assessing naturalness of an area. If, however, a major outside impact exists, it should be noted in the overall inventory area description and evaluated for its direct effects on the area." With regard to impacts to solitude, 6310.06.C.2.c.i (p. 8) notes "in making this determination, consider factors that influence solitude only as they affect a visitor's opportunity to avoid the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people in the area. Only consider the impacts of sights and sounds from outside the inventory area on the opportunity for solitude if these impacts are pervasive and omnipresent." Since the BLM holds the authority to update and maintain the inventory, but can consider information external information sources, impacts to naturalness and solitude are addressed at a general qualitative level in Section 3.20.6.2 to facilitate future inventory updates by the local BLM office on a case-by-case basis if a Project alternative affecting these units were selected and ultimately constructed.

3.20.6.1 Impacts from Terminal Construction, Operation, and Decommissioning

This section discloses impacts to land uses that would occur from construction and operation of the Northern and Southern terminals, which are common to all action alternatives.

Northern Terminal

No lands with wilderness characteristics were identified within the Northern Terminal Siting Area.

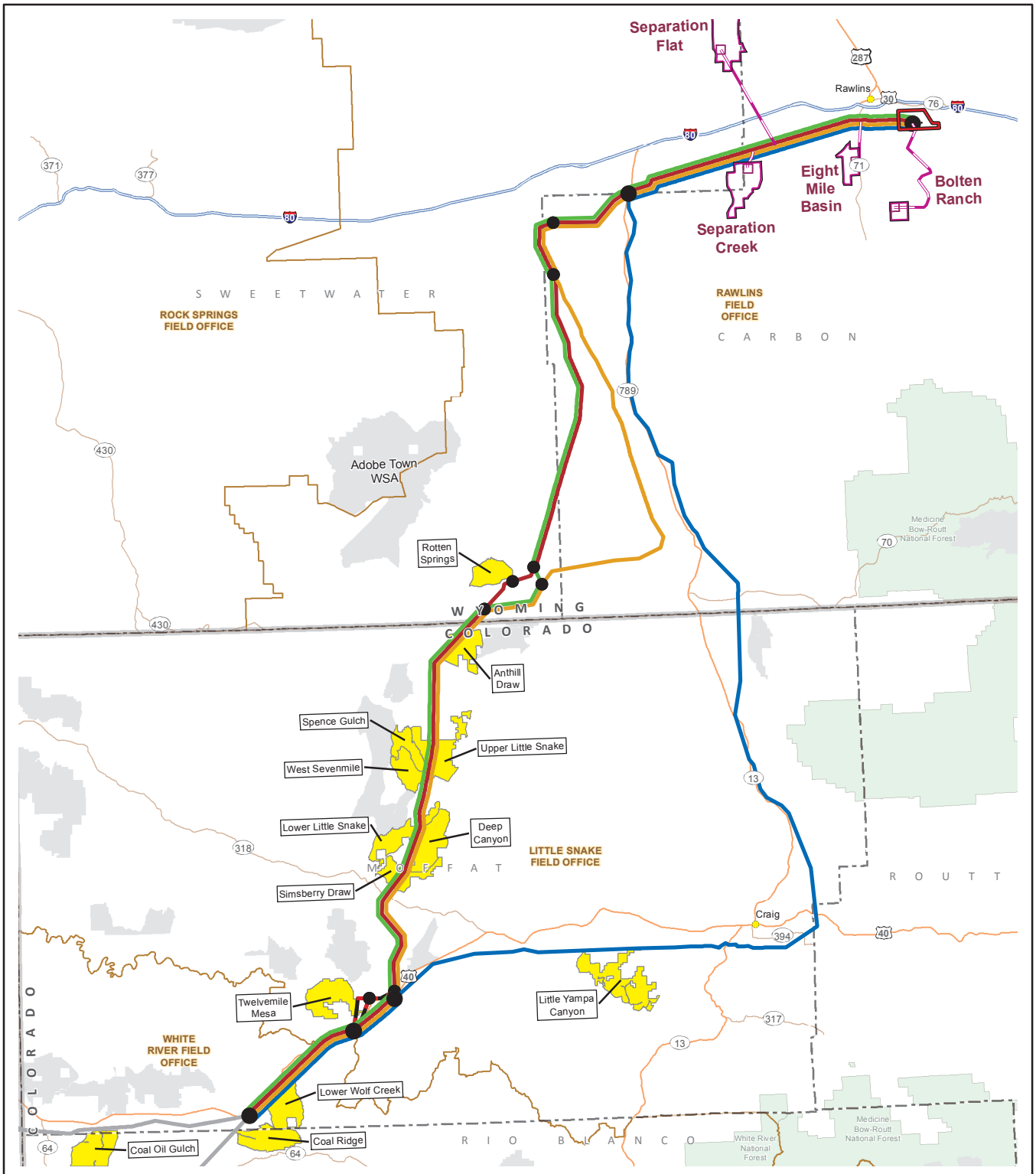
Southern Terminal

No lands with wilderness characteristics were identified within the Southern Terminal Siting Area.

Design Option 2 – DC from Wyoming to IPP; AC from IPP to Marketplace Hub

This design option involves modifications of proposed transmission facilities that would apply to all alternatives. Differences between this design option and the proposed Project include the locations of the southern converter station and ground electrode system, as well as the addition of a series compensation station midway between the IPP and Marketplace. The southern converter station would be located near the IPP in Utah instead of at the Marketplace in Nevada and the ground electrode system would be within 50 miles of the IPP. Under Design Option 2, the transmission line would be AC from the Southern Terminal Siting Area near the IPP to the Marketplace Hub in Nevada.

The relocated Southern Terminal Siting Area would comprise 93 acres of permanent disturbance and would be located on BLM lands directly adjacent to the IPP in Millard County, Utah. Development of a ground electrode siting area would comprise 40 acres and would be located on BLM and State lands in Juab County. No wilderness characteristics inventory units that possess wilderness character were identified within the relocated Southern Terminal Siting Area. Other effects to lands with wilderness characteristics from Design Option 2 would be the same as described under the transmission line alternatives since the additional components would be located within the transmission line footprint analyzed.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Separation Flat
Rawlins
Eight Mile Basin
Bolten Ranch
Separation Creek
RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
SWEETWATER
CARBON
Adobe Town WSA
Rotten Springs
WYOMING
COLORADO
Anthill Draw
Spence Gulch
Upper Little Snake
West Sevenmile
Lower Little Snake
Deep Canyon
LITTLE SNAKE FIELD OFFICE
Simsberry Draw
MOFFAT
ROUTT
Craig
Twelvemile Mesa
Little Yampa Canyon
WHITE RIVER FIELD OFFICE
Lower Wolf Creek
Coal Ridge
Coal Oil Gulch
RIO BLANCO
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest
White River National Forest
EIS Alternative Routes
Applicant Proposed I-A
Agency Preferred I-B
Alternative I-C
Alternative I-D
Alternative Variation (Var.) or Alternative Connector (Con.)
Segment not in this Region
Terminal Siting Area
Potential Ground Electrode Siting Area
Potential Ground Electrode Site
Potential Ground Electrode Overhead Electrical Line
Special Designation Area*
Proposed Wilderness
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics*
Inventoried, Pending Plan Decision
Managed as Natural Area
Not Managed for Wilderness Characteristics
Areas not Crossed by TWE
Other Special Designation Areas or Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
*Not all SDA or LWC categories appear in each region.
TRANSWEST EXPRESS TRANSMISSION PROJECT
Figure 3.20-1
Region I
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
0 5 10 20 Miles
0 5 10 20 km
1:1,000,000
N
Western AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION
Exported On: 3/24/2015

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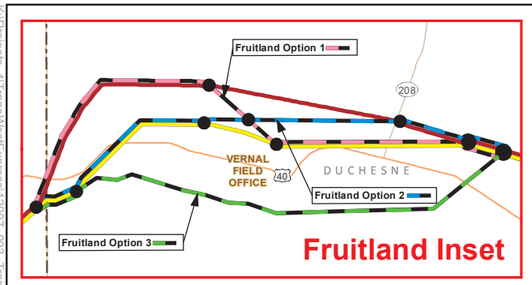
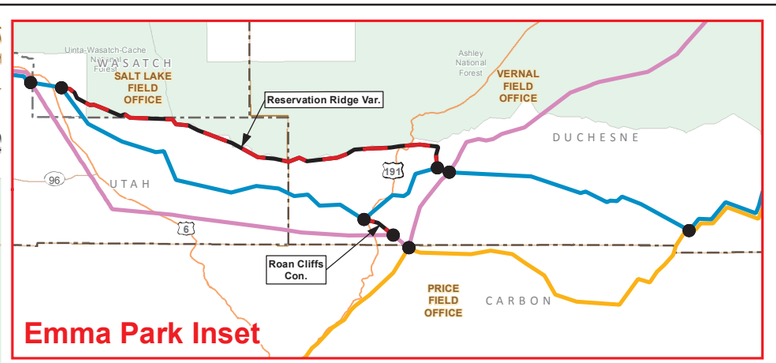
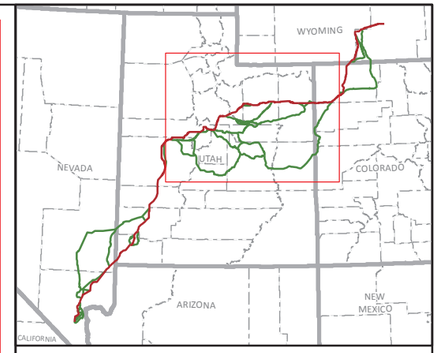
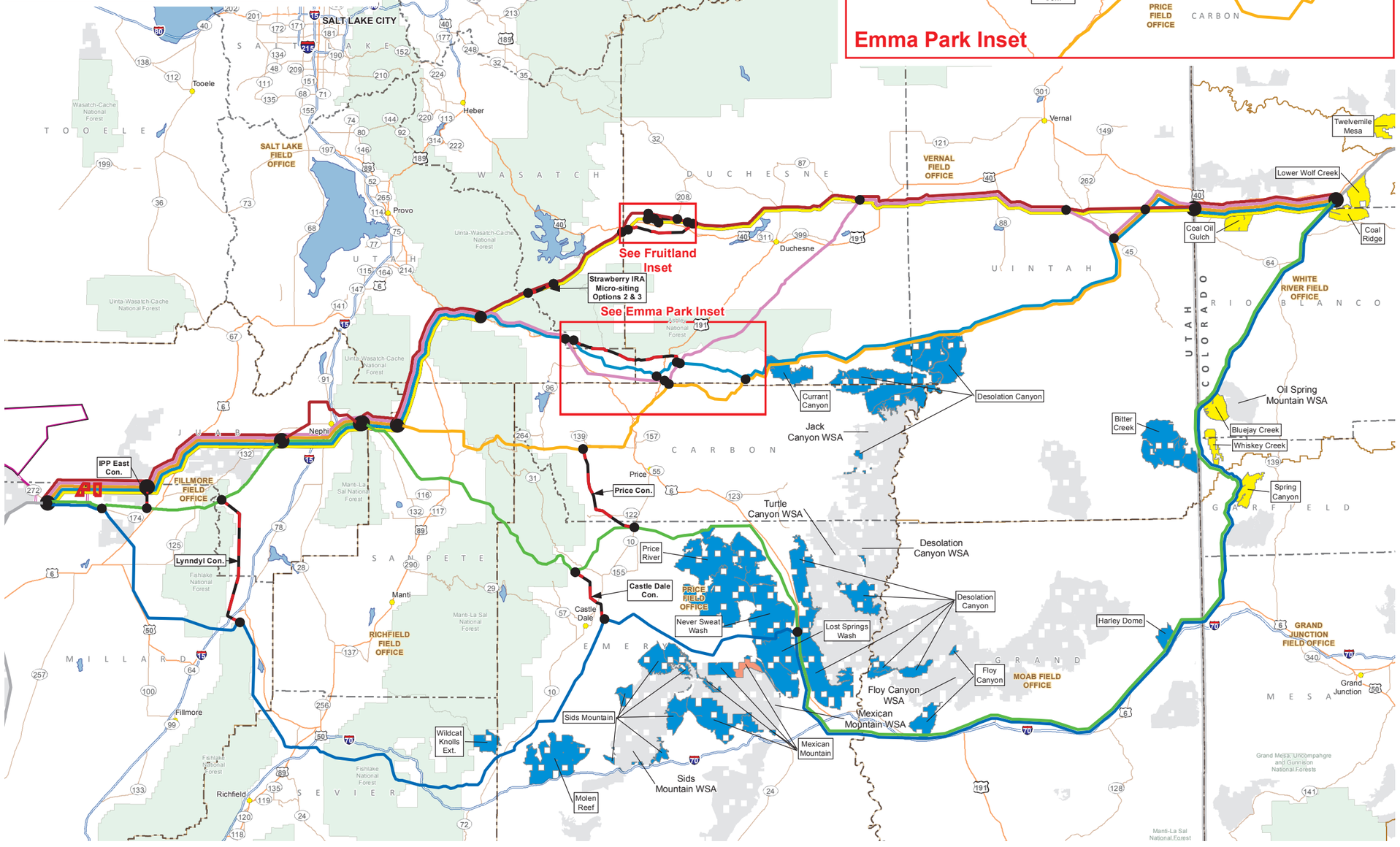








EIS Alternative Routes

- Applicant Proposed II-A
- Alternative II-B
- Alternative II-C
- Alternative II-D
- Alternative II-E
- Alternative II-F
- Agency Preferred II-G
- Alternative Variation (Var.) or Alternative Connector (Con.)
- Segment not in this Region
- Terminal Siting Area
- Potential Ground Electrode Siting Area
- Potential Ground Electrode Overhead Electrical Line

Special Designation Area*

- Proposed Wilderness

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics*

- Inventoried, Pending Plan Decision
- Managed as Natural Area
- Not Managed for Wilderness Characteristics

Areas not Crossed by TWE

- Other Special Designation Areas or Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

*Not all SDA or LWC categories appear in each region.

TRANSWEST EXPRESS TRANSMISSION PROJECT

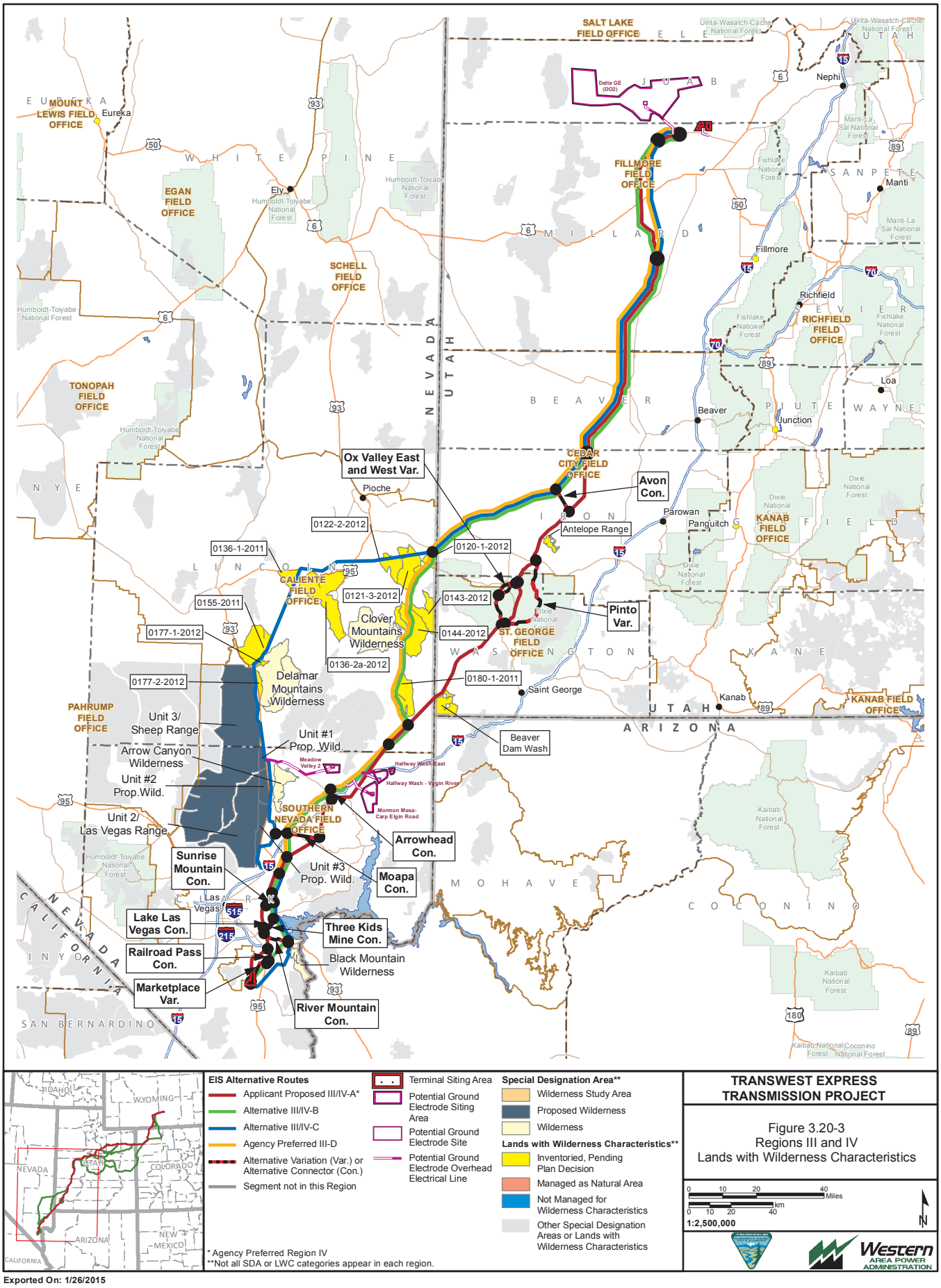
Figure 3.20-2
Region II
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

0 10 20 40 Miles
0 10 20 40 Kilometers
1:1,200,000

N

Western AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

Exported On: 3/24/2015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SALT LAKE FIELD OFFICE
MOUNT LEWIS FIELD OFFICE
Eureka
EGAN FIELD OFFICE
Ely
SCHELL FIELD OFFICE
TONOPAH FIELD OFFICE
FILLMORE FIELD OFFICE
Nephi
Manti
Fillmore
Richfield
RICHFIELD FIELD OFFICE
Loa
Beaver
Junction
CEDAR CITY FIELD OFFICE
Parowan
Panguitch
KANAB FIELD OFFICE
Antelope Range
Ox Valley East and West Var.
Pioche
Avon Con.
Pinto Var.
CALIENTE FIELD OFFICE
ST. GEORGE FIELD OFFICE
Saint George
Kanab
Beaver Dam Wash
Clover Mountains Wilderness
Delamar Mountains Wilderness
PAHRUMP FIELD OFFICE
Unit 3/ Sheep Range
Arrow Canyon Wilderness
Unit #1 Prop. Wild.
Unit #2 Prop.Wild.
Unit 2/ Las Vegas Range
SOUTHERN NEVADA FIELD OFFICE
Arrowhead Con.
Sunrise Mountain Con.
Unit #3 Prop. Wild.
Moapa Con.
Las Vegas
Lake Las Vegas Con.
Three Kids Mine Con.
Railroad Pass Con.
Black Mountain Wilderness
Marketplace Var.
River Mountain Con.
0122-2-2012
0120-1-2012
0136-1-2011
0121-3-2012
0143-2012
0155-2011
0144-2012
0177-1-2012
0136-2a-2012
0177-2-2012
0180-1-2011
Meadow Valley 2
Halfway Wash East
Halfway Wash - Virgin River
Mormon Mesa-Carp Elgin Road
NEVADA
UTAH
ARIZONA
CALIFORNIA
WHITE PINE
MILLARD
BEAVER
PIUTE
WAYNE
SANPETE
SEVIER
IRON
WASHINGTON
KANE
LINCOLN
NYE
EUREKA
MOHAVE
COCONINO
SAN BERNARDINO
INYO
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
Manti-La Sal National Forest
Fishlake National Forest
Dixie National Forest
Kaibab National Forest
Delta GE (DO2)
IDAHO
WYOMING
COLORADO
NEW MEXICO
EIS Alternative Routes
Applicant Proposed III/IV-A*
Alternative III/IV-B
Alternative III/IV-C
Agency Preferred III-D
Alternative Variation (Var.) or Alternative Connector (Con.)
Segment not in this Region
Terminal Siting Area
Potential Ground Electrode Siting Area
Potential Ground Electrode Site
Potential Ground Electrode Overhead Electrical Line
Special Designation Area**
Wilderness Study Area
Proposed Wilderness
Wilderness
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics**
Inventoried, Pending Plan Decision
Managed as Natural Area
Not Managed for Wilderness Characteristics
Other Special Designation Areas or Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
* Agency Preferred Region IV
**Not all SDA or LWC categories appear in each region.
TRANSWEST EXPRESS TRANSMISSION PROJECT
Figure 3.20-3
Regions III and IV
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
0 10 20 40 Miles
0 10 20 40 km
1:2,500,000
N
Western AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION
Exported On: 1/26/2015

Table 3.20-1 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Units in the Analysis Area [1]

Region	Field Office	Unit ID/Name	Unit Size (acres)	Sufficient Size	Naturalness	Solitude	Primitive and Unconfined Recreation	Supplemental Values	Approved RMP Decisions
I	Rawlins	WY-030-13N95W24-2012 – Rotten Springs	6,105	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
I	Little Snake	CON-010-022 – Spence Gulch	5,359	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
I	Little Snake	CON-010-023 – Upper Little Snake	11,459	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
I	Little Snake	CON-010-029 – West Sevenmile	6,326	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
I	Little Snake	CON-010-031 – Lower Little Snake	7,336	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N
I	Little Snake	CON-010-033 – Deep Canyon	10,975	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
I	Little Snake	CON-010-034 – Simsberry Draw	6,347	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
I	Little Snake	CON-010-038– Twelvemile Mesa	10,239	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
I	Little Snake	CON-010-045 – Little Yampa Canyon	14,824	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
I	Little Snake	CON-010-046 – Anthill Draw	7,607	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
I	White River	CO-110-025 – Lower Wolf Creek	9,567	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
II	White River	CO-110-002 – Whiskey Creek	5,205	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
II	White River	CO-110-007 – Bluejay Creek	9,895	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
II	White River	CO-110-021 – Coal Ridge	9,021	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
II	White River	CO-110-022 – Coal Oil Gulch	9,376	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
II	Grand Junction	Spring Canyon	8,831	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
II	Vernal	Bitter Creek	33,488	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
II	Vernal	Currant Canyon	14,434	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
II	Vernal/Price	Desolation Canyon	170,606	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
II	Moab	Floy Canyon	9,983	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
II	Moab	Harley Dome	5,304	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character

Table 3.20-1 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Units in the Analysis Area [1]

Region	Field Office	Unit ID/Name	Unit Size (acres)	Sufficient Size	Naturalness	Solitude	Primitive and Unconfined Recreation	Supplemental Values	Approved RMP Decisions
II	Price	Lost Springs Wash	32,104	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
II	Price	Mexican Mountain	40,955	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – manage only 4,200 acres as natural area; remainder not managed for wilderness character
II	Price	Molen Reef	33,281	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
II	Price	Never Sweat Wash	29,162	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
II	Price	Price River	89,059	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
II	Price	Sids Mountain	34,592	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
II	Price	Wildcat Knolls Ext.	7,003	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y – not managed for wilderness character
III	Cedar City	UT-040-037A - Antelope Range	5,928	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
III	St. George	Beaver Dam Wash	22,277	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0120-1-2012	9,106	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0121-3-2012	41,962	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0122-2-2012	19,870	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0136-1-2011	12,921	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0136-2a-2012	79,032	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0143-2012	25,778	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0144-2012	57,999	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0155-2011	45,786	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0177-1-2012	2,522	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0177-2-2012	6,058	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
III	Caliente	NV-040-0180-1-2011	35,519	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N

[1] Only inventory units found to possess wilderness characteristics are included in the table for further analysis. Information on units that have undergone inventory but were found to not possess wilderness characteristics is on file with the BLM FO.

Design Option 3 – Phased Build Out

This design option involves modifications of proposed transmission facilities that would apply to all alternatives. Development of a substation would comprise 75 acres of permanent disturbance and would be located completely on BLM lands directly adjacent to the IPP within Millard County. The land that would be used for the substation is the same as would be used for the Southern Terminal Siting Area under Design Option 2. Effects to lands with wilderness characteristics from Design Option 3 would be the same as described under the transmission line alternatives since the additional components would be located within the transmission line footprint analyzed. Timing of impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics as described under the proposed Project would vary due to construction schedule differences.

3.20.6.2 Impacts Common to all Alternative Routes and Associated Facilities

There are inventory units found to contain wilderness characteristics that would be affected by the Project alternatives. Although none of the inventory units affected by the project are currently being managed to protect existing wilderness characteristics, it should be noted that the Project may alter some of these inventory units to a point where these wilderness characteristics would become compromised and no longer available for protection in a future RMP process. The analysis in the following sections discloses the impacts on the wilderness characteristics in these existing inventory units. These inventory units that contain wilderness characteristics could be intersected or included in built portions of the proposed Project and, as a result, some remaining portions may no longer meet the criteria for size requirements (greater than 5,000 acres), naturalness, or opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The Project effects on the unit size is detailed in the following sections by unit by alternative.

In general, in areas where a Project alternative intersects wilderness characteristics inventory units, impacts to one or more of the wilderness characteristics of size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive types of recreation could compromise the ability to retain the wilderness resource. In addition to impacts on the unit size as noted above, short-term construction effects (1-5 years) also would affect naturalness and opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation of the area from the introduction of noticeable human-made features and disturbances. These short-term effects would include the introduction of the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people in the area from ground clearing and man-made structures as well as increased noise and dust and localized vehicle emissions associated with construction activities and equipment in the project ROW. While these effects would be limited to the short-term construction timeframe, there also would be long-term effects (post-construction through the life of the project—5-50 years or longer) on the naturalness and opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation of the area associated with the influences of the Project infrastructure, including the prominent transmission structures. While the reduced size of the unit may still encompass more than the minimum 5,000 acres, areas may become dominated by the Project infrastructure especially in open areas or over ridges, which can compromise naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive types of recreation in portions or the entirety of the unit. In these areas, the project infrastructure introduces unnatural elements that would be substantially noticeable, affecting the natural experience sought by the average visitor in affected areas. Section 3.12 provides a thorough viewshed analysis that discloses the potential of the project to influence visibility in the surrounding areas, which also could compromise the area's naturalness. While outstanding opportunities for solitude would primarily be affected during project construction, there also would be limited human access and use of the ROW for long-term maintenance, including periodic access by vehicles to check structures and mowing or trimming where needed, but these activities would generally be unobtrusive. In addition, while outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive types of recreation could become affected in localized areas, it is possible that these opportunities may continue in other portions of the unit that are further removed or screened via topography or vegetation from the Project infrastructure. Various forms of primitive and unconfined types of recreation, such as hiking, hunting, and sightseeing, in the area could continue after the project is

built, although the quality of the recreation experience may decline. Section 3.13 provides additional discussion on the effects of the project to the area recreation opportunities.

Avoidance of the inventory units would be the most direct way to reduce these associated impacts to wilderness characteristics. Previously undeveloped areas (areas that coincide with wilderness inventory units as well as other similar areas) was one of the interdisciplinary factors considered in the routing, siting, and alternatives development process for this project, which is further discussed in Sections 2.3 and 2.5 of Chapter 2.0 as well as **Appendix D**. The most effective way to avoid areas with wilderness character within the study area is to follow existing transmission, roads, or already disturbed areas. This approach was considered in the range of alternatives and served as a primary starting point in alternatives development as explained in Chapter 2.0 and **Appendix D**. However, given that there are many other environmental, topographic, and engineering constraints that factor into transmission routing, there are some alternatives developed that could not be routed to avoid inventory units that contain wilderness characteristics without greater adverse effects to other resources.

In situations where the inventory units could not be avoided through routing or micrositing, the extent or magnitude of effects on the inventoried naturalness, solitude/unconfined, and primitive recreation wilderness characteristics could be minimized to the extent practical through the applicant committed measures. TransWest's Design Features and BMPs include measures to reduce some of the impacts that may affect inventory units that contain wilderness characteristics. These measures pertain to minimizing construction impacts from vegetation removal or earth movement during construction (TWE-26, TWE-27, and TWE-28) and measures to minimize impacts from placement of access roads, support areas, and other infrastructure (TWE-5 through TWE-17). Section 3.12 also discusses impacts to visual resources in the area and proposed mitigations to address visual impacts from the Project that could further reduce the visibility of these human elements introduced to the area. In addition to the applicant committed measures and mitigation proposed to protect other resource values, the following mitigation would be applied:

LWC-1*: Applicable SDA mitigations noted in Section 3.15 shall be applied to areas documented to contain wilderness characteristics. Application of these mitigations would be implemented at the discretion of the local BLM FO.*

While applicant committed measures as well as proposed mitigations for other resource values provide for measures to protect resources contributing to an area's wilderness characteristics, **LWC-1** would provide an additional method for the BLM to minimize impacts. Effectiveness of **LWC-1** includes minimizing Project effects to resources that contribute to the area wilderness character by consolidating and minimizing surface disturbances during project construction, access, and facility placement as well as assure that the alignment would not further encroach into areas not currently affected by the Project as disclosed in this EIS. Applying the SDA mitigations to inventoried areas that have been documented to contain wilderness characteristics would allow for the local BLM office discretion in the best way to retain as much of the wilderness characteristics in areas not directly affected for future management consideration.

3.20.6.3 Region I

Affected lands with wilderness characteristics units within Region I crossed by proposed transmission route alignments are listed in **Table 3.20-2**. As additional access roads and facilities are sited within the analysis area, additional impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics units could occur and eliminate portions or the entirety of the unit from meeting lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. However, applicant committed measures and mitigations proposed for the Project would reduce the potential for these impacts to occur, as discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Alternative I-A (Applicant Proposed)

Alternative I-A would affect 8 units and would eliminate 1 unit (Little Snake Unit CON-010-034 – Simsberry Draw totaling 6,347 acres) from meeting the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. Of the affected units, there would be 7 units remaining totaling 52,412 acres that would continue to meet the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria, but 12 portions totaling 12,563 acres would be eliminated. Since the 7 remaining units would be larger than 5,000 acres, it is possible that the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria for solitude and naturalness would continue to be met in the remaining portions. Impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units is discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Table 3.20-2 Impacts to Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in Region I

Alternative	Field Office	Unit ID/Name	Unit Size (acres)	Units Resulting From Intersection					Remaining Units Meeting Wilderness Character Criteria
				Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	
I-A	Little Snake	CON-010-022– Spence Gulch	5,359	5,350	9	–	–	–	1
I-A	Little Snake	CON-010-023 – Upper Little Snake	11,459	8,261	3,198	–	–	–	1
I-A	Little Snake	CON-010-029 – West Sevenmile	6,326	6,172	154	–	–	–	1
I-A	Little Snake	CON-010-031– Lower Little Snake	7,336	6,025	1,310	–	–	–	1
I-A	Little Snake	CON-010-033– Deep Canyon	10,975	10,417	543	15	–	–	1
I-A	Little Snake	CON-010-034 – Simsberry Draw	6,347	3,244	3,103	–	–	–	0
I-A	Little Snake	CON-010-046– Anthill Draw	7,607	6,811	796	–	–	–	1
I-A	White River	CO-110-025 – Lower Wolf Creek	9,567	9,376	151	30	10	–	1
I-B	Little Snake	CON-010-022 – Spence Gulch	5,359	5,350	9	–	–	–	1
I-B	Little Snake	CON-010-023 – Upper Little Snake	11,459	8,261	3,198	–	–	–	1
I-B	Little Snake	CON-010-029 – West Sevenmile	6,326	6,172	154	–	–	–	1
I-B	Little Snake	CON-010-031 – Lower Little Snake	7,336	6,025	1,310	–	–	–	1
I-B	Little Snake	CON-010-033 – Deep Canyon	10,975	10,417	543	15	–	–	1
I-B	Little Snake	CON-010-034 – Simsberry Draw	6,347	3,244	3,103	–	–	–	0
I-B	Little Snake	CON-010-046 – Anthill Draw	7,607	6,811	796	–	–	–	1
I-B	White River	CO-110-025 – Lower Wolf Creek	9,567	9,376	151	30	10	–	1
I-C	Little Snake	CON-010-045 – Little Yampa Canyon	14,824	14,746	79	–	–	–	1
I-C	White River	CO-110-025 – Lower Wolf Creek	9,567	9,376	151	30	10	–	1
I-D	Little Snake	CON-010-022 – Spence Gulch	5,359	5,350	9	–	–	–	1
I-D	Little Snake	CON-010-023 – Upper Little Snake	11,459	8,261	3,198	–	–	–	1
I-D	Little Snake	CON-010-029 – West Sevenmile	6,326	6,172	154	–	–	–	1
I-D	Little Snake	CON-010-031 – Lower Little Snake	7,336	6,025	1,310	–	–	–	1
I-D	Little Snake	CON-010-033 – Deep Canyon	10,975	10,417	543	15	–	–	1
I-D	Little Snake	CON-010-034 – Simsberry Draw	6,347	3,244	3,103	–	–	–	0
I-D	Little Snake	CON-010-046 – Anthill Draw	7,607	6,811	796	–	–	–	1
I-D	White River	CO-110-025 – Lower Wolf Creek	9,567	9,376	151	30	10	–	1
Tuttle Ranch Micro-siting Option 4	Little Snake	CON-010-038 – Twelvemile Mesa	10,239	9,972	267	–	–	–	1

Alternative I-B (Agency Preferred)

Alternative I-B follows the Alternative I-A route with the exception of a two-mile deviation in Sweetwater County, an area where there are no lands with wilderness characteristics. All impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics would be the same as described for Alternative I-A.

Alternative I-C

Alternative I-C would affect two units and would not eliminate any units from meeting the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. Of the affected units, there would be 2 areas remaining, totaling 24,122 acres, which would continue to meet the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria and 4 portions of the units, totaling 270 acres, which would be eliminated. Since the 2 remaining units would be larger than 5,000 acres, it is possible that the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria for solitude and naturalness would continue to be met in the remaining portions. Impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units is discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Alternative I-D

Although the alternative route varies from Alternative I-A where there are no lands with wilderness characteristics in Wyoming, the portion of the alternative through Colorado is the same as Alternative I-A. Therefore, impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics would be the same as Alternative I-A.

The Tuttle Ranch Micro-siting Option 4 would affect one unit (Little Snake Unit CON-010-038 – Twelvemile Mesa), but would not result in the unit being eliminated from meeting lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. A total of 9,972 acres would remain and 267 acres would be eliminated. Impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units is discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Alternative Ground Electrode Systems in Region I

There are four possible locations for ground electrode systems in Region I, all of which are located in Wyoming. There are no lands with wilderness characteristics in the vicinity of those locations.

Region I Conclusion

Alternatives I-A, I-B, and I-D would affect the most lands with wilderness characteristics units (8) while Alternative I-C would affect the least (2). Alternatives I-A, I-B, and I-D would eliminate Little Snake Unit CON-010-034–Simsberry Draw.

3.20.6.4 Region II

Affected lands with wilderness characteristics units within Region II crossed by proposed transmission route alignments are listed in **Table 3.20-3**. As additional access roads and facilities are sited within the analysis area, additional impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics units could occur and eliminate portions or the entirety of the unit from meeting lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. However, applicant committed measures and mitigations proposed for the Project would reduce the potential for these impacts to occur, as discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Alternative II-A (Applicant Proposed)

Alternative II-A would not affect any units that possess wilderness characteristics.

There are no lands with wilderness characteristics units near the Fruitland or Strawberry IRA micro-siting options; therefore, impacts would be same as described for Alternative II-A.

Table 3.20-3 Impacts to Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in Region II

Alternative	Field Office	Unit ID/Name	Unit Size (acres)	Units Resulting From Intersection								Remaining Units Meeting Wilderness Character Criteria
				Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	
II-B	Moab	Floy Canyon	9,983	9,780	203		–	–	–	–	–	1
II-B	Moab	Harley Dome	5,304	4,941	207	156	–	–	–	–	–	0
II-B	Price	Never Sweat Wash	29,162	29,113	49	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
II-B	Price	Price River	89,059	88,812	137	111	–	–	–	–	–	1
II-B	White River	CO-110-021 – Coal Ridge	9,021	8,972	49		–	–	–	–	–	1
II-B	White River	CO-110-007 – Bluejay Creek	9,895	9,044	725	126	–	–	–	–	–	1
II-C	Moab	Floy Canyon	9,983	9,780	203		–	–	–	–	–	1
II-C	Moab	Harley Dome	5,304	4,941	207	156	–	–	–	–	–	0
II-C	Price	Lost Springs Wash	32,104	31,992	112	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
II-C	Price	Never Sweat Wash	29,162	28,245	736	181	–	–	–	–	–	1
II-C	White River	CO-110-021 – Coal Ridge	9,021	8,972	49	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
II-C	White River	CO-110-007 – Bluejay Creek	9,895	9,044	725	126	–	–	–	–	–	1
II-D	Vernal	Currant Canyon	14,434	11,880	2,506	49	–	–	–	–	–	1
II-D	Vernal	Desolation Canyon-2	170,606	169,645	451	161	116	77	68	63	26	1
II-F	Vernal	Currant Canyon	14,434	11,880	2,506	49	–	–	–	–	–	1
II-F	Vernal	Desolation Canyon	170,607	169,645	451	161	116	77	68	63	26	1

Alternative II-B

Alternative II-B would affect 6 units and would eliminate 1 unit (Harley Dome in Moab totaling 5,304 acres) from meeting the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. Of the affected units, there would be 5 areas remaining, totaling 145,722 acres, which would continue to meet the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria and 11 portions of the units, totaling 6,703 acres, which would be eliminated. Since the 5 remaining units would be larger than 5,000 acres, it is possible that the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria for solitude and naturalness would continue to be met in the remaining portions. Impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units is discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Alternative II-C

Although the alternative route varies from Alternative II-B where there are no lands with wilderness characteristics, the portion of the alternative in relation to lands with wilderness characteristics through Colorado and Utah is the same as Alternative II-B. Therefore, impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics would be the same as Alternative II-B.

Alternative II-D

Alternative II-D would affect two units and would not eliminate any of these units from meeting the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. Of the affected units, there would be 2 areas remaining, totaling 181,525 acres, which would continue to meet the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria and 8 portions of the units, totaling 3,516 acres, which would be eliminated. Since the 2 remaining units would be larger than 5,000 acres, it is possible that the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria for solitude and naturalness would continue to be met in the remaining portions. Impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units is discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Alternative II-E

Alternative II-E would not affect any units that possess wilderness characteristics.

Alternative II-F

Although the alternative route varies from Alternative II-D where there are no lands with wilderness characteristics, the portion of the alternative in relation to lands with wilderness characteristics through Utah is the same as Alternative II-D. Therefore, impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics would be the same as Alternative II-D.

Alternative II-G (Agency Preferred)

Alternative II-G would not affect any units that possess wilderness characteristics.

Alternative Variation in Region II

Reservation Ridge Alternative Variation

There are no lands with wilderness characteristics units in the vicinity of this alternative variation; therefore, no impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics would be anticipated with this alternative variation.

Alternative Connectors in Region II

There are no lands with wilderness characteristics units in the vicinity of the Castle Dale, IPP East, Lynndyl, Price, or Roan Cliffs Alternative Connectors; therefore, no impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics would be anticipated with these alternative connectors.

Region II Series Compensation Stations (Design Option 3)

If Design Option 3 were implemented, a series compensation station would be necessary along the alternative routes of Region II during the first-phase (AC operation). There are three potential sites, each corresponding to specific alternative routes. Upon completion of Phase 2 of Design Option 3, when there would be no utility for the station, it would be deconstructed and reclaimed to the original condition. These series compensation station alternatives are depicted in **Figure 2-3**.

Series Compensation Station 1 – Design Option 3 corresponds to Alternatives II-A and II-E. There are no lands with wilderness characteristics in the proximity of Series Compensation Station 1.

Series Compensation Station 2 – Design Option 3 corresponds to Alternatives II-B and II-C. There is one unit (Harley Dome) that has wilderness characteristics immediately to the south of the proposed Series Compensation Station 2 which would not be affected by this component. However, if either Alternative II-B or II-C is selected, the Harley Dome unit would be bisected by the transmission alignment and neither of the remaining portions would be large enough to qualify as lands with wilderness characteristics. Impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units is discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Series Compensation Station 3 – Design Option 3 corresponds to Alternatives II-D and II-F. This proposed location would be within the Desolation Canyon unit that has lands with wilderness characteristics. Forty-five acres of the 170,606-acre Desolation Canyon unit would be eliminated from that unit if this option were selected. However, if either Alternative II-D or II-F is selected, the Desolation Canyon unit would be bisected by the transmission alignment multiple times (as shown in **Table 3.20-3**), reducing the unit size to 169,645 acres, and this portion of the unit would already have been affected by the alignment. Impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units is discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Region II Conclusion

Alternatives II-B and II-C would affect the most lands with wilderness characteristics units (6) and Alternatives II-A, II-E, and II-G would not affect any units found to possess wilderness characteristics. Alternatives II-B and II-C would both eliminate one unit of lands with wilderness characteristics (Harley Dome in Moab).

3.20.6.5 Region III

Affected lands with wilderness characteristics units within Region III crossed by proposed transmission route alignments are listed in **Table 3.20-4**. As additional access roads and facilities are sited within the analysis area, additional impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics units could occur and eliminate portions or the entirety of the unit from meeting lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. However, applicant committed measures and mitigations proposed for the Project would reduce the potential for these impacts to occur, as discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Alternative III-A (Applicant Proposed)

Alternative III-A would not affect any units that possess wilderness characteristics.

Alternative III-B

Alternative III-B would affect 4 units and eliminate 1 unit (Caliente Unit 0120-1-2012) totaling 9,108 acres from meeting the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. Of the affected units, there would be 4 areas remaining, totaling 133,503 acres, which would continue to meet the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria and 13 portions of the units, totaling 13,397 acres, which would be eliminated. Since the 4 remaining units would be larger than 5,000 acres, it is possible that the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria for solitude and naturalness would continue to be met in the remaining portions.

Impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units is discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Table 3.20-4 Impacts to Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in Region III

Alternative	Field Office	Unit ID/Name	Unit Size (Acres)	Units Resulting From Intersection						Remaining Units Meeting Wilderness Character Criteria
				Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	
III-B	Caliente	0120-1-2012	9,108	4,878	4,230	–	–	–	–	0
III-B	Caliente	0121-3-2012	44,232	42,175	1,796	261	–	–	–	1
III-B	Caliente	0144-2012	58,024	39,549	18,253	205	8	6	3	2
III-B	Caliente	0180-1-2011	35,537	33,526	1,513	357	59	58	23	1
III-C	Caliente	0120-1-2012	9,108	8,989	119	–	–	–	–	1
III-C	Caliente	0121-3-2012	44,232	36,018	8,214	–	–	–	–	2
III-C	Caliente	0122-2-2012	19,883	16,761	2,945	177	–	–	–	1
III-C	Caliente	0155-2011	45,894	45,547	347		–	–	–	1
III-C	Caliente	0177-1-2012	2,528	2,519	9	–	–	–	–	1
III-D	Caliente	0120-1-2012	9,108	4,878	4,230	–	–	–	–	0
III-D	Caliente	0121-3-2012	44,232	42,175	1,796	261	–	–	–	1
III-D	Caliente	0144-2012	58,024	39,549	18,253	205	8	6	3	2
III-D	Caliente	0180-1-2011	35,537	33,526	1,513	357	59	58	23	1

Alternative III-C

Alternative III-C would affect five units and no units would be eliminated from meeting the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria. Of the affected units, there would be 6 areas remaining, totaling 118, 048 acres, which would continue to meet the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria and 5 portions of the units, totaling 3,597 acres, which would be eliminated. Since the 6 remaining units would be larger than 5,000 acres, it is possible that the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria for solitude and naturalness would continue to be met in the remaining portions. Impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units is discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

Alternative III-D (Agency Preferred)

Although the alternative route varies from Alternative III-B in areas where there are no lands with wilderness characteristics, the portion of the alternative in relation to lands with wilderness characteristics through Nevada is the same as Alternative III-B. Therefore, impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics would be the same as Alternative III-B.

Alternative Variations in Region III

There are no lands with wilderness characteristics units affected by alternative variations in this region.

Alternative Connector in Region III

There are no lands with wilderness characteristics units affected by alternative connectors in this region.

Alternative Ground Electrode Systems in Region III

There are no lands with wilderness characteristics units affected by ground electrode beds in this region.

Region III Series Compensation Stations (Design Option 2)

If Design Option 2 were implemented, a series compensation station would be necessary along the AC-configured alternative routes of Region III. There are three potential sites, each corresponding to a specific alternative route. These series compensation station alternatives are depicted in **Figure 2-2**.

Series Compensation Station 1 – Design Option 2 corresponds to Alternative III-A. There are no lands with wilderness characteristics in the proximity of Series Compensation Station 1.

Series Compensation Station 2 – Design Option 2 corresponds to Alternative III-C. There are no lands with wilderness characteristics in the proximity of Series Compensation Station 2.

Series Compensation Station 3 – Design Option 2 corresponds to Alternative II-B. There are no lands with wilderness characteristics in the proximity of Series Compensation Station 3.

Region III Conclusion

Alternative III-C would affect the most lands with wilderness characteristics units (5) and Alternative III-A would affect the least (0). Alternatives III-B and III-D would each eliminate one unit of lands with wilderness characteristics (Caliente Unit 0120-1-2012).

3.20.6.6 Region IV

There are no inventory units that potentially meet lands with wilderness characteristics criteria within Region IV crossed by proposed or alternative transmission route alignments.

Alternative Connectors in Region IV

There are no lands with wilderness characteristics units affected by the alternative connectors in this region.

3.20.6.7 Residual Effects

Residual effects would be the same as the impacts discussed under the action alternatives. Inventory units that are determined to meet criteria for lands with wilderness characteristics could be intersected or include built portions of the proposed Project and, as a result, some remaining portions may no longer meet the criteria for size requirements (greater than 5,000 acres), naturalness, or solitude. While applicant committed measures and mitigation proposed for the Project would minimize the extent of the Project impacts, impacts to naturalness and solitude in the remaining portions of these units would continue as discussed in Section 3.20.6.2.

3.20.6.8 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

All operation impacts to the wilderness characteristics of the affected units would be irretrievable until transmission line decommissioning, after which time the wilderness characteristics of affected units could be reclaimed. However, reclamation activities may have limited success in areas with poor soils, some vegetation communities would take years to reestablish, and some areas may never return to their former vegetation cover and composition. As such, these impacts may represent an irreversible commitment of naturalness in lands with wilderness characteristics units.

3.20.6.9 Relationship between Local Short-term Uses and Long-term Productivity

Implementation of the proposed Project would result in the use of some lands with wilderness characteristics units as ROW corridors. Long-term productivity of the affected units would be largely unaffected except for areas where reclamation may have limited success.

3.20.6.10 Impacts to Lands with Wilderness Characteristics from the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed Project would not be developed. There would be no impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics units beyond existing conditions and trends.